

LAPTOP USE – FEBRUARY 2008 GENERAL BAR EXAMINATION

Laptop Use Offered for all: Anyone wishing to use a laptop for the February 2008 bar examination will be permitted to do so, provided the applicant timely files to sit for the examination, properly completes and files the application to use a laptop, and fully complies with the procedure for qualifying the laptop for use at the bar examination.

Participants will be required to use licensed security software designed to provide a basic word processor while locking out access to all other programs resident on the computer, including Internet access, during testing. The proprietary word processor is designed to be familiar to users of WordPerfect and Microsoft Word. Copy, cut and paste are available. Spell check is not.

A participant will have to pay a total of \$103 directly to the software security vendor, ExamSoft, for use of its proprietary software, SofTest®, and for access to an electric outlet. The only form of payment which will be accepted is a credit card (Mastercard, Visa, or American Express); payment must be made on-line at ExamSoft's website when registering the laptop. Once you register to use your laptop, none of your laptop fee is refundable.

Before you apply to use a laptop for the February 2008 general bar examination, you should read this entire document and also read the ExamSoft frequently asked questions (FAQs) at www.examsoft.com/faq. The FAQs contain important information about how to avoid conflicts between SofTest and other software running in the background on your computer, such as anti-spyware, firewalls, and other computer security software. Note that out of 282 laptop users at the July 2007 bar examination, only one laptop user did the examination by laptop, and the problem was associated with extraneous software running in the background on that laptop.

If you are accepted into the laptop program, you will be required to install the SofTest software and complete the laptop registration process during the two week period from Monday, February 4 through Friday, February 15, 2008. If you fail to properly register your laptop then, you will have to handwrite the examination. You will receive your seating assignment prior to the opening of the laptop registration process; your seating assignment will NOT be changed in the event you fail to complete registration of your laptop.

PROCEDURE TO APPLY FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE LAPTOP PROGRAM

- You must have timely filed a properly completed bar application and original petition (for first time takers) or a retake petition (for repeaters).
- You must complete the **application for participation in the laptop program** and **submit it separately** to the Board's office so that it is received not later than December 20, 2007. The laptop application form is appended to this document (see page 8).

OVERVIEW OF PROCESS FOR USING A LAPTOP

- Apply for approval to use a laptop and be accepted for the February 2008 examination
- Have experience using laptop computers
- Have an email address which the Board will use throughout the examination cycle to contact you, both before and after administration of the bar examination
- Agree to handwrite your exam answers in the event of a hardware or software malfunction or power failure during the examination
- Confirm that your laptop meets the minimum specifications listed below
- Ensure that your laptop is configured for Internet access
- Familiarize yourself with the **Frequently Asked Questions** section on the *Support* tab of the ExamSoft website
- Download and register SofTest on the laptop computer you will use at the examination (you are permitted to register only one laptop) in accordance with instructions
- **Download and complete a Mock Exam and practice using SofTest to upload an examination answer to ExamSoft's server**
- **Download from ExamSoft's website the two files which you will use to record your actual examination answers: one file for the morning session and one file for the afternoon session of the written test**
- Open the designated examination answer file at the beginning of the morning and afternoon written test sessions using a password provided to you prior to the start of each test session. Keyboard your answer for each session into the designated answer file.
- Upload the two files (morning and afternoon), containing your actual examination answers, to the ExamSoft server after the conclusion of the afternoon session of the written test. You will need to accomplish the upload at an internet connection, which you are responsible for obtaining, at a location outside the examination site. You must complete the upload not later than 11:59 p.m., Eastern Standard Time on Tuesday, February 26, 2008.

LAPTOP SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

1. You must register and use one laptop computer for the examination. Once you have registered, you cannot change to another computer. You must keep the laptop you use in your possession until the results of the examination are released. **Your examination answers will be saved in encrypted format on your laptop's hard drive, and you must be able to make your laptop available to the Board after the examination, if necessary, to access the encrypted examination answers.**

2. The ExamSoft software works only on PCs using the English language version of Windows Vista (any edition), Windows XP (Professional, Home, and Tablet PC editions) and Windows 2000 (Professional) operating systems. **Macintosh computers, including those running PC emulation, are incompatible with SofTest and cannot be used.**

3. Minimum PC system requirements:

CPU = 450 MHz Pentium III or Industry Equivalent

RAM = 256 MB

50 MB of free space on hard drive; hard drive must be internal to the laptop

English language version of Windows Vista, Windows XP (Home, Pro, or Tablet PC) or Windows 2000 (Professional)

Web Browser = Internet Explorer 6.0 or greater

Configured for Internet connectivity (AOL users must have AOL 6.0 or higher)

Screen resolution: minimum of 1024 x 768

A floppy disk drive is NOT required for Maryland's examination

PROCEDURE TO REGISTER AND QUALIFY YOUR LAPTOP FOR USE

1. **Registration Period:** If you are accepted for participation in the laptop program, the Board will advise you by email not later than February 1, 2008 and provide you instructions for registration and qualification of your laptop, including your application number and password to logon to the ExamSoft website. When you are accepted, the Board will notify you of the date ExamSoft will open on-line registration and the date ExamSoft will close on-line registration, a period of approximately 2 weeks. If you fail to register during this period, you will not be able to use your laptop. All registration and qualification actions must be accomplished at ExamSoft's website during the registration period. **This registration period is planned to open on February 4 and close on February 15, 2008.**

2. Registration and Laptop Qualification Procedure:

a. **Register and Install Software:** You must logon using the application number and password which the State Board of Law Examiners will provide to you and follow the instructions on the "Exam Takers" tab at ExamSoft's website (www.examsoft.com/mdbar). You must pay \$103 by credit card to ExamSoft when you register. You must pre-install SofTest© software specifically for the February 2008 Maryland bar examination even if you have previously installed SofTest for another purpose. You must install the software on the computer you will use at the examination. You cannot transfer or otherwise change to another computer subsequent to the initial installation. Do not delete or uninstall SofTest or any SofTest program directory files or folders until after the examination results are released. Do not disable or tamper with SofTest's security features. Any attempt to do so will be viewed as cheating and may result in your disqualification for admission to the Maryland bar. Do not alter or change your laptop's configuration **and do not use system restore to revert to an earlier restore point** after you complete the registration process.

Once you have properly registered, you will receive confirmation from ExamSoft that you have properly downloaded and installed SofTest and registered your copy of SofTest. At the same time, you also should automatically receive a download of the Mock Exam (see below) and the two actual examination answer files that you will use on examination day to record your answers. You will receive email confirmation that you have downloaded the Mock Exam and the morning and afternoon examination answer files.

b. Practice the Mock Exam:

Completion of the Mock Exam is mandatory for successful qualification of your laptop. The purpose of the Mock Exam is to confirm that your laptop is compatible with SofTest and to enable you to familiarize yourself with how to open an answer file, write your answer using the proprietary word processor, and upload your completed Mock Exam answer file via the Internet prior to the date of the actual examination. **The Mock Exam is a practice answer file; there is no question provided with the Mock Exam. The content of what you write for the Mock Exam is your choice and your responsibility.** It is helpful to practice typing in the Mock Exam file for a period of time sufficient to verify that your SofTest

installation will work properly for the actual duration of the bar examination. However, the duration of your Mock Exam practice is strictly up to you.

You should complete the Mock Exam off-line and then connect to the internet and upload your Mock Exam answer file to the ExamSoft website. During the upload process, you will see a visual “progress status” (blue bar). When the upload is complete, a “success” message is displayed. An email confirmation of your answer upload will be sent to you at the email address you provided during registration. If you do not receive the automatic confirming email, you should contact ExamSoft to confirm that your Mock Exam answer successfully uploaded and to ensure that you understand how to complete the upload procedure. **The procedure you use to open, type, and upload the Mock Exam is the procedure you will use on the day of the examination to open, type, and upload the morning and afternoon files for the Board’s Written Test.**

c. **Successful Laptop Qualification:** You will have successfully qualified your laptop for the bar examination once you have 1. installed SofTest, 2. received confirmation of successful download of the morning and afternoon bar examination answer files, and 3. practiced upload of the Mock Exam file.

d. **Additional Practice with the Software:** A SofTest icon will be loaded on your Windows desktop when you register the software. There is a practice exam built into the software you download. Double click the SofTest icon, then click “Launch SofTest.” When SofTest opens, click the “Practice Exam” button. You **cannot** save your answer to the Practice Exam, and you **cannot** upload your answer file to ExamSoft. The purpose of the Practice Exam is to familiarize you with the SofTest exam environment and word processing features. You may use this Practice Exam as many times as you wish.

3. Technical Support: If you have problems or questions, first consult ExamSoft’s “Frequently Asked Questions” web page at www.examsoft.com/barfaq. Technical Support also is available via email at BarSupport@examsoft.com or by phone toll-free at 866-429-8889.

The State Board of Law Examiners does not have the capacity to offer technical support. Hence, you must seek all technical support from ExamSoft.

4. Procedure If You Experience Laptop Problems after Qualification: If your laptop computer becomes inoperable after you complete the qualification process, you must obtain authorization from the State Board of Law Examiners to qualify another laptop and to download another set of answer files. You will be required to show good cause and appropriate documentation to receive this authorization. You will not be permitted, under any circumstances, to qualify a backup laptop.

Do not copy the ExamSoft program from one computer to another. You will receive an error message at the outset of the bar examination if you attempt to use a laptop other than the one on which you initially completed the qualification process. In that event, you will have to handwrite the examination answers.

Examination Day Procedures

1. Permitted Items: You must bring your laptop, the compatible power cord (transformer), and a power strip/extension cord. Be sure that your laptop battery is fully charged in case there is a power interruption. You may bring a compatible mouse and full size or ergonomic keyboard, both of which may be wireless, and you may bring your laptop briefcase or laptop backpack.

2. Prohibited Items: You may not bring a laptop other than the one on which you successfully completed certification. Backup laptops are prohibited. External hard drives are prohibited. You may not bring floppy diskettes, flash drives, CDs, DVDs or any other media. Unauthorized media will be confiscated and will not be returned.

3. Start Time: You must arrive in the designated examination room not later than 8:15 a.m. on Tuesday, February 26, 2008 to set up your laptop, boot up your system, and initialize the SofTest program. The password to open the morning session answer file will be provided then. General announcements for the examination will begin promptly at 8:45 a.m. The examination time will commence to run at the conclusion of the general announcements (approximately 9 am). No one will be given extra instructions or extra time if he or she arrives late. **Anyone unable to successfully launch the SofTest software by the commencement of the examination will be required to handwrite his or her answers (no exceptions for any reason!).**

4. Execution of Waiver of Liability: At the examination site, during initialization of the SofTest program, you will be required to execute a waiver confirming that you have complied with the conditions for using a laptop, acknowledging that you will handwrite the examination if the software or hardware on your laptop does not work, and releasing the State Board of Law Examiners and ExamSoft from any liability in the event you experience a malfunction of the software or the hardware. In the event of a malfunction, you will be required to handwrite the examination.

5. Examination Steps

a. You will use the morning session answer file for essay questions 1 through 7. You will use the afternoon session answer file for essay questions 8 through 10 and the Multistate Performance Test (MPT). Examination questions will be distributed to you in the same hardcopy format received by applicants who elect to handwrite the essays and MPT.

b. Be careful to follow the instructions provided at the examination. Use great care while editing to ensure you do not inadvertently delete part of your answer.

c. No technical support will be provided at your seat after the examination begins. If you are unable to resolve any problem that occurs after the examination starts, you must handwrite the remainder of your answers. **(No exceptions for any reason!)**

6. Post Examination Steps

a. You must upload your answers to ExamSoft after you leave the examination site on Tuesday, February 26, 2008. You must use your own Internet connection to upload your answer files. You must complete the upload by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Standard Time on Tuesday, February 26, 2008. You should receive a confirmation email automatically from ExamSoft when you successfully complete the upload.

b. The State Board of Law Examiners will print your answers at its office using a standard format for line spacing and font. Hence, your printed answers may look different from what you saw on your laptop screen. However, the content and organization of your answers will not be altered.

c. If there is a problem printing your answers, the State Board of Law Examiners will require you to bring your laptop to the Board's office so that the encrypted copy of your answers may be retrieved from your hard drive.

d. The State Board of Law Examiners will grade your printed answers using the same procedures employed for grading handwritten answers.

**Laptop Application Form
for the February 2008 Maryland Bar Examination**

(PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE)

**The State Board of Law Examiners must receive this completed form not later than
Thursday, December 20, 2007 at 2011F Commerce Park Drive, Annapolis, MD
21401.**

Full Name of Applicant:_____

Full Street Address:_____

City, State, Zip Code:_____

Email Address:_____

To avoid confusion, use 1 for the number "1", i for the letter "i", L for the letter
"l". Use a vertical slash through the number "0" to distinguish it from the letter "o."

***The State Board of Law Examiners must be able to contact you at this email
address during the entire examination cycle.***

Social Security Number:_____

Disclosure is Voluntary. Disclosure minimizes the risk of misidentification

Telephone Number:_____

I hereby apply to use a laptop computer to type the written part of the February 2008 Maryland Bar Examination. I affirm that I have read the guidelines for participating in the laptop program. I understand my responsibilities for registering my laptop, following all of the procedures for recording my answers, and uploading my answers via an Internet connection outside of the examination site not later than 11:59 p.m. EST on Tuesday, February 26, 2008.

I hereby release the State Board of Law Examiners and ExamSoft from any and all liability arising from or arising as a consequence of a software or hardware malfunction or power failure in connection with my use of the SofTest software, including any loss of an answer. I understand that, should I experience a software or hardware malfunction during the bar examination, I will have to complete the written test by handwriting the remainder of my answers. I understand that I will not receive a grade for any answer which is lost and cannot be recovered, regardless of the reason for the loss.

Applicant signature:_____

Date:_____